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Senator Jones and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I first want to express my gratitude to you for allowing me to sit before you to offer my comment and harsh opposition to this bill. My goal today is to ask you to hit the pause button. Just hit the pause button and realize the destruction that this bill, if passed, will cause to so many of Michigan's families.

This bill essentially replicates a badly broken GAL system. Multiple states are pushing GAL reform at this very moment. Michigan is lagging behind the rest of the country in this regard. Here we are attempting to replicate a GAL system with a parent coordinator system, while other states are moving in the opposite direction. In fact, in the last year, both Maine and Pennsylvania have abolished parent coordinators, putting an end to their massive destructive powers.

First, I question the constitutionality of using parent coordinators. It allows continuous discovery by each parent into the other parent's affairs. Both parties are forced to give up their fourth amendment rights. There are no civil protections afforded. It permits the invasion of highly personal information with no justification. Why no civil right protection? Does this state consider persons going through highly contentious divorces to be criminals?

There are no financial boundaries. Is impoverishment of families deemed to be okay in this state? Retirement funds drained, homes lost, savings depleted, under-funded college funds, lives financially ruined. GALs and parent coordinators are a great way for one parent to spend the higher-earning parent's money.

There is no program evaluation built in. Is it expected to be perfect? What about consumer evaluations, "after service," that are a part of almost every sector of American life? Will data be collected for assessment and evaluation? There is no mention of such.

There is no complaint procedure with a list of complaint issues nor written instructions about how to file a complaint. Does the author of this bill expect that it will engender no complaints?

There is no limit on the bill's existence, i.e. a one- or two-year "sunset" clause.

There is no demonstration of why the bill is needed. It appears to be about income embellishment for the divorce bar.

There is absolutely no evidence of any consumer input. Don't consumers/users/parties count in Michigan? What happened to democracy? What happened to constitutional rights?

As a physician, I propose to you a simple analogy, that makes abundant sense to me. Let's say that I delegate my responsibility as a doctor to someone, just anyone, train them for a nominal amount of time, say equal to the minimal time that a GAL receives to do his or her job. Now let's say that I delegate my "doctor" responsibilities to them. That is, I make them responsible for making life-altering decisions, the same decisions that I spent over a decade of hard and grueling training to learn. Now I set that person loose and entrust him to save lives, and to heal people. Next, let's say that something goes wrong, terribly wrong, and someone's life is destroyed or adversely affected in some way. And to add the final layer, let's say I give them blanket judicial immunity. No licensing board to answer to, no oversight, no accountability, no peer review. Just free reign to use their newly ordained skills to simply practice medicine without a license, or a "quasi license," so to speak. Who would do that, you may wonder. YOU might, in essence, by encouraging this bill to pass. Because that's very similar to what the parent coordinator bill does. It allows essentially untrained individuals, or "mini-judges," to make

decisions that are under the purview of real judges, elected officials, who, like doctors, have trained for many years to reach that level. It doesn't make sense, does it? Untrained "mini-doctors," would kill people. And, I submit to you, untrained "mini-judges," will kill families.

Who created this bill? Who wants it? GALs, attorneys, the "divorce industry?" It is very crudely designed and written, with the fingerprints of the "divorce industry" all over it. It is naked in its disregard of democratic input from users and potential users. The civil rights issues are indefensible in non-criminal cases. It is an example of a piece of work created by "blind greed." It should be killed. At the very least, it should be a cause for pause. And that is what I am begging you to do today - to hit the pause button before perpetuating a bill that replicates a broken GAL system in this state, a system that destroyed one family irreparably - mine. That's right. I appear before you today as a parent whose family was massacred by the GAL system of "justice" in this state.

The details of my debacle with the GAL system are not important to share here today. I'm not here about my family, it's too late for them. I can only hope and pray that, by the grace of God, my five children will heal from the actions of the "family" court system, all in due time. I am here to prevent others from the well-meaning intentions of a legal system designed to protect families, from being destroyed.

Divorce and child custody is not a contest, Senators. Unless a parent has been proven to be a sexual abuser or is guilty of a similar egregious action, no parent should "win." It's about doing what's right for Michigan's children. I certainly didn't "win," and neither did my children. The harm imposed on my kids is immeasurable. I will heal. I am not sure that they will.

You may think I'm yet one more woman complaining about "sour grapes," after a contentious divorce. My understanding is that it takes a few sour grapes to make a fine wine. Am I upset? Yes. I am very upset. And what am I going to do about it? I'm going to continue to do the next right thing. And today, that consists of attempting to keep yet other families from suffering from the harm imposed by the current family law system. Families are sacred. Let's keep them together, not destroy them.

I'm asking you to slow down and take a breath, because our family law system needs to be fundamentally repaired. But this certainly is not where to start. Why would you start here by perpetuating a part of it that does real damage. Why aren't we starting by focusing on the families that simply go broke because they must comply with constant ordered services that are often arbitrary and the results of which are subsequently ignored? A year ago there was a bill that was sponsored by nine Representatives that mandated joint custody in every custody dispute between parents except in certain, obvious cases. Why not start there? Perhaps because there's no money in it? That bill went nowhere. Meanwhile, unqualified GALs with judicial immunity continue to decide to sever custody simply because he or she doesn't agree with a parent's decision for sports, or doesn't approve of the way a parent prioritized after school activities, or worse yet, simply didn't like one parent and created his or her own narrative about that parent, all the while flying under the radar of both the public and the judges.

We have some really big problems in Michigan. We have a family law system in place in which a healthy, 49 yo spouse can be awarded lifetime alimony to be paid out of the ex-spouse's disability income. Or a judge can order multiple psychological evaluations at a citizen's expense and then ignore the results of all, severing custody completely, as the result of a GAL's narrative, with no recourse. What happened to due process in this state? Those examples sound ridiculous, right? You may think that there must be a backstory, or there must be some

sort of justification. But think about it. What justification could there ever be that would allow these things to happen?

In summary, again, I ask you to hit the pause button, maybe do even more, maybe stop this runaway train that is destroying Michigan families, not preserving them.

Senators, people like myself, after nearly three years of litigation, separation from my children whom I love with my heart and soul, disappointment after disappointment, loss of all wealth and savings that I accumulated in my career as a pediatric emergency medicine specialist, highly trained to save the lives of children, reputation tarnished, having endured a nightmare that I wouldn't wish on anyone, broken people like myself, generally walk away with what little dignity they have left. Not me. Dr. Sandy Dettmann will never, ever shut up, and I am certain that I do not stand alone.

Thank you.

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